

CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT

IN CHARGE OF
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FRESH AIR AND SUNSHINE

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If pure air is important for healthy persons it is doubly so for the sick. It is often a source of wonder why so many describe in minute detail the treatment intended for a patient and say not a single word about those important aids, fresh air and sunshine. We have simply to walk from the fresh air of out-doors into a close, dark room in which some one has spent the night to appreciate the irritating, stupefying, disease-producing effects of impure air. Many object to ventilating the room at night on account of breathing the night air. True, the night air lacks the purifying and tonic germ-destroying power of sunlight, but even so it is infinitely better than the foul air of the poorly ventilated, stuffy room, and as every one is entitled to breathe the best and purest air he can get, then at night breathe the night air.

Patients are very apt to confuse cold air with pure air, but it is not our object to introduce cold air into a room, but pure, fresh air warmed. In most cases this can be done with slight effort. A window should be down at the top and up at the bottom each a couple of inches. The average storm window is a nuisance and a provocation. It is a common practice to pull out the two slats supporting the upper sash, shorten them two or three inches, and put them in place again. This allows the upper sash to drop two or three inches, and ventilation is partly insured. It is also important that the curtains, if there are any, be pulled aside at the top and the blind so arranged as not to interfere with the current of air. In ventilating be careful to avoid draughts. An ordinary fireplace is an excellent means of ventilation, as, besides warming the pure air, it makes the room cheerful.

In the summer months ventilation is no longer the knotty subject, but in winter many prejudices are encountered.

In phthisical cases particularly are fresh air and sunshine of vast importance. This was demonstrated to some extent by Trudeau's experiments with rabbits inoculated with tubercle bacilli. Those kept in the

dark, damp, poorly-ventilated rooms quickly succumbed, while those allowed to run wild either recovered altogether or at most with some slight lesion.

Pasteur found that germs floating in the air were generally dead, killed, it was supposed, by the sunshine. Sunlight is death to the germ, and fresh air is the greatest antidote to microbes.

When the pure sunlight is allowed to freely play through our houses, besides making the surroundings brighter, it as well influences the inmates, as the blood flows more easily, the color is brighter, and the mind clearer. Shaded people suffer from two evils, first, lack of sunshine, the very life and power of humanity; second, from impure air.

It is in the congested centres of population where light and air are defective that the germ is favorably nourished, preserved, and multiplied.

How important, then, that in the care of the sick we see to it that the irritating narcotic, headache-producing effect of dark and ill-ventilated rooms shall be reduced to a minimum, and in its place an abundance of those all-pervading and simple elements, the invigorating, appetizing, and buoyant tonics, fresh air and sunshine.

There is another form of sunshine aside from that which is received from the sun's rays that is of immeasurable worth in the sick-room, namely, cheerfulness. The source of this form of sunshine is usually those in attendance. In the presence and personality of the cheerful one is an influence that acts upon others as summer warmth on the fields and forests. Such an one has the power to call forth the best in their patients, making them braver and happier. How quickly sunshine acts, bringing an exhilaration of spirits, a quickening of energy, a renewal of zest and interest in living. "Great hearts there are among men," says Hillis. "They carry a volume of manhood; their presence is sunshine; their coming changes our climate; they oil the bearings of life; their shadows always fall behind them; they make right-living easy. Blessed are the sunshine carriers! they represent the best forces of civilization."

Knowing, then, the virtue of a cheerful countenance, check expression when sombre feeling oppresses. To say how sad one feels when the heart sinks for the moment deepens the inward trouble and spreads it to outside people. One would not spread disease, therefore do not spread mental distress. The true mission is to brighten, not darken, life.

